

MEMORY OF YESTERDAY

By Gershon Bradford

Reminiscences

1. Myrick, 1890, 1891, 1892

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"Good morning, Colonel Myrick," was my sprightly greeting to the late brother of the late twins at Hall's Corner. He was standing in the yard behind the picket fence, wearing a large Texas hat. The response was restrained.

"Colonel, in 1890 you and I were in the same Sunday school on Copley Square."

"I was there."

May I pause for a moment to explain: In 1890 Duxbury offered an ambitious boy few opportunities. So Horace Myrick headed for Boston and his future. He wisely associated himself with the Second Unitarian Church, the Rev. Edward Horton, pastor, one of the most respected clergymen in Boston. He became Horace's friend for life.

After some years passed Horace joined the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Boston. There he was in the company of men who flowed with the affairs of the city. Being a faithful member he at length was elected their colonel. I never knew Horace's main business, perhaps insurance, but it was rumored that he was well acquainted in the halls of the legislature.

"Colonel, we have a mutual friend."

"Who?"

"Walter Queen."

"You know Walter Queen," advancing toward the fence.

"Shipmates for 2 years and a friend ever since. Colonel, why did you Ancients and Honourables elect Walter your colonel when he only drank milk?"

"Because we loved him," and well they might.

The mask fell and after all that work I got a story. It ran closely like this:

The Myles Standish Monument Association of which the Rev. Horton was president, has successfully completed the monument, but had run out of funds and there were none in sight for maintenance. He asked Horace if there was any chance to persuade the State to take over the reservation.

Horace thought it worth a try and proceeded with the details. He emphasized to Dr. Horton that the report of the committee must be unanimous. It was composed of 3 members, 3 Democrats, Mr. Mulligan and Mr. O'Toole, and one Republican, Mr. Cabot. The names are fictional, but highly significant.

On the day of the hearing, Horace presented the case for the petitioners. His argument ran as my memory directs:

"This association has worked long and diligently to erect this impressive monument to honor the first military leader of New England. It is doubtful if the Colony could have survived without his civic and military services. He knew the ways and wiles of the Indian as well as the white man and used his talents for the benefit of the struggling colony. Standish belonged to an ancient and noble family. Through the years it had divided into 2 branches, the Standishes of Standish, to which Myles belonged, and the Standishes of Duxbury Hall. In the Reformation the Standishes of Standish remained Catholic while the Standishes of Duxbury Hall turned Protestant.

While yet a young man Queen Elizabeth commissioned Myles a lieutenant for service in the Low Countries that were being invaded by a Spanish Army under the Duke of Parma. A truce was soon arranged and curiously Standish did not return home, but remained in the country. He married and turned up in Leyden about 1619. there he gravitated to the cultural society of the University where he became acquainted with the Rev. John Robinson and William Brewster. Brewster, a practical man, knew that the proposed colony in America must have some means of defense, he grasped the opportunity for that purpose. Standish became a member of the Pilgrim band. He served them faithfully for 35 years dying at Duxbury in 1656.

Dr. Horton expostulated with Horace for introducing Standish's religion. The composition of the committee was again impressed upon him, yet he muttered something about staying in his pulpit. (Incidentally, the records show that Standish attended Brewster's Pilgrim Church, but does not show that he joined it.)

In 2 weeks or so the committee reported unanimously in favor of the petitioners. The ball had started to roll to a successful conclusion. I have not examined the records on Beacon Hill, but it appears that Horace Myrick did a handsome thing for Duxbury.